FASHION AND LENT.

SOBER BLACK IS NOW RIVALLED BY FAWN AND NUN'S GRAY.

GORGEOUS ROBES FOR EASTER.

A Wealth of Textiles That Is Being Thoroughly Discussed by Prospective Wearers—The Newest Bodice.

(Written for the Dispatch.)

Fashion is supposed to step to one side when Lent appears. However, it is so often the unexpected that happens, that it is no surprise to learn about the great attention being paid this season to Lenten costumes. Naturally, they will be black to a great extent, but there has been no little relaxation from the sombre hues of other days this season, and that is why the violet taffeta silk and fawn and nun's grey coloring are noticeable among the materials which will be utilized to robe the form of the fashionable church woman.

It is a question if the Artful Dodger himself would not be kept busy if he attempted to equal the agility of many supposedly devout church members, when it comes to finding ways in which to honor Lent rather in the breach than in the observance. There is no intention of making this a moral essay. These are only the natural thoughts which occur to one after visiting the shops of the fashionable milliners and seeing what their combined continental dictators have decreed what we must wear.

There will be flowers. Oh, certainly. Every one has a soft spot in his or her heart for violets, and so violets are to be fashionable. No one will be sorry. Perhaps the best thing to do is to whisper the reason why. The consensus of opinion seems to be that it is because violets are cheap. There are any quantity of florists who will sell them for 10 cents a bunch. This is about as inexpensive a decoration as the most impoverished fashionable could desire. Of course, if you buy Parma violets, the inexpensive feature is obliterated. So far, however, nothing has been said about the variety. So long as they are violets, that is all that is necessary.

The violet is not only in fashion for floral decoration, but is included in the colors that are permitted to soften the darkness of the ordinary Lenten attire. One style of hat that is sure to be worn a great deal is made of suede felt. Satin ribbons are used in the decoration, as are chiffon and Parma violets. Then there is the mouchoir muff of velvet, which has trimmings to match. One of the very noticeable costumes now being made at a fashionable establishment consists of a very soft drap d'ete of the shade called suede. The skirt, seven gored, is lined with violet taffeta silk with a suede velvet bolero. The latter is silk lined and trimmed with large mother-of-pearl buttons. The long close sleeves terminate in deep points on the top of the hand. The points show the velvet lining and there is a small velvet puff at the top. The collar, which is standing, is large and cut in points with violet lining. The inside trimming consists of chiffon. You might travel a Sabbath day's journey and not see a prettier one.

Like all things, Lent must have its end, and already engaged couples and their friends are talking about the Easter and post-Easter weddings, not so much for the weddings themselves as what they permit the young ladies who take part therein to wear. Talking about it too soon, you say? Not at all. If a woman isn't privileged to discuss what she is going to wear at a wedding weeks in advance, and in detail, then she has lost one of the greatest privileges of her sex. It may be that this discussion is helped along this year by the fact of the very numerous and beautiful textures which are appropriate for costumes, that all sorts of femininity is supposed to wear on nuptial occasions.

So far as the effects and models are concerned, the tendency is markedly toward Marie Antoinette styles. The exquisitely flowered satin brocades, the fichus, and other lace decorations, all go to constitute a custom that, with the flaring collar and the coiffure, must attract attention and admiration. What more can the wearer of the gown ask than this? Toilettes of the time of Queen Elizabeth, Pompadour gowns, robes, like those worn by the Renaissance queens, Mary Stuart costumes, all these are being talked of favorably, and it seems more than likely that our fashionable church weddings during the month of smiles and tears will take us back to the time of which our histories have taught us; even more than the Bradley-Martin ball, which set New York swelldom in a tremor of excitement.

One of the features of fashion just now—a cold weather feature—is the brocaded wool bodice, and the bodice of brocaded silk. Both are seen to a considerable extent. They are generally worn with plain skirts of contrasting color, as when the mixture is blue and black, and the skirt is blue or green. These are usually made with wide, cape-like revers, which are bordered with fur, having a narrow basque below and a belt above. While this is a very comfortable cold weather substitute for silk, it is probable this style of bodice will retain its popularity during the summer, the fur, of course, being eliminated from the material used in the making thereof.

This brings home the fact of the slight difference which women make nowadays in their dress for winter and summer, compared with what they once did. Nowadays cloth gowns and tweeds are worn the year round. Some of the smart set have adopted the large linen embroidered collars edged with a frill, these being worn with velvet gowns. With these are worn the twice-around cravats, sometimes. There is no one sort or size of basque that has received the particular indorsement of fashion. With outdoor coats of a certain sort the basques are longer, but this is not the case with the trimmed velvet jackets, and it is a source of pleasure that the square tabs soften the outlines without apparently increasing the size of the waist.

One of the prettiest effects in headwear just now is found in the flower toques. A very charming specimen is made entirely of pansies. On one side is a chou of dark velvet, with one of violet velvet, while a long white osprey adds beauty and effect to the crown. One of the hats which has attracted particular attention is shaped like a mushroom. It is made of Holland-covered canvas and black velvet ribbon. At the left side, and just over the ear, are two pink roses, while two black feathers at the top add elegance and effectiveness to the whole. Returning to the toque, it would not be fair to dismiss the subject without saying something of the very charming arrangement whose crown is made up of plaited black tulle. Its rim is narrow and turned up, and formed of steel sequins traced on to the tulle. The trimming is of black ostrich feathers.

And now that the winter dulness has gone from us and spring cheer is ours by at least every technical right, we can talk about all these things and be up to date. To be sure, it is Lent, and one must have a bit of grave with the gay during that period, but we will all get a special dispensation from Dame Fashion, and in modern eyes that is sufficient to excuse anything.

SPRING WALKING GOWNS.

1. Tweed costume with braided bolero and white kid vest. Plain sleeves with three epaulette frills.
2. Tailor gown in rough novelty goods. White braided collar and brocade vest.
3. Striped wool dress with soft velvet vest, and velvet edged epaulette frills on sleeves and front. Twine-colored guipure in bolero shape is set on each front.
4. Pale-gray rough wool gown, trimmed with braid. Draped velvet waistband.

Publication of State Papers.

(For the Dispatch.)

Our people—that is, of the United States—are alike resourceful and self-reliant. They are undoubtedly innately reverential in all things contributary to progress, and they are thus the acknowledged progressive race in all essentials to progress.

All party lines or currency or monetary discussion are now in the lee of calm consideration, seemingly. The influence of the preservation of history needs no exponency. There has been for some time past an increasing acknowledgment of the value of the records of the past of this country, as variedly illustrated.

The regard has been general, it is believed, in all of the States of our Union.

The spur may not be an idle or vain one, in the desire of social advancement, for that which makes us better acquainted with excellent personal exemplification may lead further to a more serious study of the history of our country. Thus patriotic, and even social, societies have inspiring value. But the broad spirit of archaeological investigation and acute historical investigation, which mark the efforts of the United States, are signally honoring, and keep our country, by any contrast, in the van of true enlightening and beneficent progress.

The South has the quickening of spirit, it is intrinsically indicated. Our institutions of learning are making provisions for indicated requirements, with the foremost. Our sister States, the Carolinas, appear to have quite a stir just now in historical output. North Carolina, besides various private contributions, is awake again as to the "Colonial Records." This valuable quarry was instigated and instituted by the late gallant man and patriot and earnest citizen, Colonel William L. Saunders, Secretary of State (and whom it was admitted—so beloved was he—might have been Governor, and under his editorial supervisions ten quarto volumes were issued. Upon his so-lamented death, the duty of further editing the "Records" was committed to the able hand of Judge Walter Clark. It has been announced that he has ready three additional volumes, the first of which is a general index to the preceding ten volumes, edited by Colonel Saunders, and the two remaining comprise valuable matter, edited by Judge Clark.

South Carolina is active, too. Its historical society has being printed in this city by Mr. W. Ellis Jones (a well-known printer) a volume which will probably comprehend five hundred or more pages of original matter, important to the correct history of the State. It will include the "Shaftesbury Papers," and other selections, made by the late W. Noel Sainsbury, the whole carefully and ably annotated.

The earnest citizen and ex-journalist (of such abundant and variedly useful endeavor) Major William A. Courtenay, ex-Mayor of Charleston, as chairman of the Cowpens Centennial Committee, has recently put forth the printed "Proceedings of the Unveiling of the Battle Monument," at Spartanburg, S. C., with illustrative matter of special historical value.

Further, in the enlightening spirit, General Edward McCrady, of Charleston, has written and proposes to publish, a comprehensive and critical history of his native State. Other of the Southern States are also alert. The paramount value of the records and historical muniments of Virginia are gratefully admitted, no one questions. Of our "Calendar of State Papers" eleven volumes have been published, but the publication has been suspended for several years. The last volume, XI., was issued quite four years ago, we think.

It has been complained by students that the volumes issued were not adequately indexed. The Dispatch has from time to time urged the preparation of a general index to the eleven volumes. It might seem that we could now gracefully follow the example of our sister, North Carolina, as to her "Records." It has been stated that our State authorities have been induced to undertake the preparation and publication of "The Proceedings of the Virginia Company" from the manuscript copy belonging to the Virginia Historical Society. It is to be hoped that essential progress has been made upon this undertaking.

The Modern French Metric System Versus Ancient Anglo-Saxon Measures.

To the Editor of the Dispatch:

Professor Wilson, in the December Forum, says: "Science has bred 'n us a spirit of experiment and a contempt for the past. It has made the legislator confident that he can create, and the philosopher sure that God cannot." In this spirit certain members of the present Congress want to do away with our ancient Anglo-Saxon measures, and after 1900 make the French metric system compulsory.

About the middle of the eighteenth century Voltaire and his colleagues deluged France with infidelity. At the close of the same century the Reign of Terror deluged France with blood. H. Grattan Guiniss says: "The French revolution could never have assumed the character it did had not the French people previously, through the pernicious teachings of the infidel philosophers, lost all fear of God and all respect for man. The Reign of Terror witnessed the slaughter of 1,022,000 persons of all ranks and ages, and of both sexes, till the streets of Paris ran with blood, and the guillotines could not overtake their work. Hundreds were roasted alive in heated ovens, or tortured to death by other infernal cruelties. Christianity was publicly renounced, and a prostitute enthroned as Goddess of Reason at Notre Dame, and worshipped by the National Convention and by the mob of Paris with the wildest orgies of licentiousness; the most horrid mockery of the solemn rites of Christianity was publicly enacted, an ass being made to drink the sacramental wine."

C. Piozzi Smyth, Astronomer Royal for Scotland, says: "The French nation, at their first revolution, formally declared before high Heaven that there is no God; elevated man into God's place; abolished for themselves the week of seven days, as well as annual chronology by the Christian era, and established a new philosophers' invention, called from its chief linear standard the metrical system of weights and measures."

DECIMAL SYSTEM OF TIME.

These wild revolutionists matched their decimal system of measures by a decimal system of time, making a year of ten months; but the year soon righted itself again to twelve. They flung aside the God-made week of seven days, and substituted a man-made week of ten. From the beginning God hallowed the seventh day, uniting this perfect number in various ways through nature—in the seven rainbow colors, in the seven musical tones, in the seven-year locusts, and all through the wonderful laws of life of insects, reptiles, birds, and man's own, from the milk teeth of his childhood to the threescore years and ten. The French found nine days' work too much, and the natural law of God, whom they had defied, forced the tired nation back to the week of seven days, teaching them what they would have known if they had not rejected Christ—that the Sabbath was made for man.

They flung aside the Christian era to date from the French revolution. French immigration dwindled; Christian commerce expanded, extending the use of the Christian era throughout the business world, even to heathen countries, and the French, in order to be up to date, again date their letters from the birth of Christ.

They fixed up a metric system of metrology, whose only good feature is its decimal division, a feature not peculiar to the French system nor original with it, and a good feature which is incomplete for human beings who every day do things by halves and quarters, instead of tenths, as witness our own decimal money, which could not remain dimes and dollars, but had to interweave quarters and halves.

The astronomer Herschel says: "So long as the human mind remains mathematical it will prefer a diameter to a circumference." The French unmathematically took a curved line as their basis for measuring straight ones. They took a small arc of the earth running through Paris. A hundred years ago, when they took it, the earth was thought to be round at the equator; science now declares it to be irregularly ellipsoidal. Then they thought the earth's meridians all equal; science now says no two probably are. If the out-of-date scientists of a hundred years ago blundered in basing straight measure upon a curve, and then made a second mistake in measuring the curve, will advanced scientists a hundred years hence be satisfied to search for nature's truths with this false standard? If not, can the United States afford to adopt it?

The ark of Noah, the tabernacle in the wilderness, the ark of the covenant, all the sacred vessels, the holy of holies, and the entire temple were constructed upon a perfect metrology. The ark of Noah equalled 100,000 arks of the covenant; the holy of holies, a perfect cube, equalled 10,000 arks of the covenant, divided by 5.7 the mean density of the earth, thus linking these God-given measures with this God-given earth. The standing of the divine metrology is the sacred cubit. In his "Dissertation on Cubits," Sir Isaac Newton pointed out the existence of a sacred and a profane system of metrology, and although Sir Isaac Newton's words were almost worshipped by his countrymen upon all other subjects, his most earnest conclusions in metrology were simply set at naught, and the editors of our English Bibles did not hesitate to go on printing in their commentaries the British equivalents, not of the Hebrew measures, but those of Egypt and Babylon, because more easily determined.

PYRAMID OF GIZEH.

In shape the simplest, in size the largest, in time the oldest of all earthly monuments; with four sides exactly facing north, south, east, and west; upon fifteen acres of levelled solid rock, stands the great Pyramid of Gizeh; in Egypt, but not of Egypt, for just beneath it the present Egyptians measure off their Nile rice-lands with the old Coptic 20.7 inch cubit of the ancient, idolatrous Pharaohs. This measure applies to the pyramid leaves it as dumb as the Sphinx. But the sacred cubit of 25 inches, through the awe-inspiring interpretations wrung by Piozzi Smyth and others, from the exact measurements of its silent stones, turns one of the seven wonders of the ancient world into the one great wonder of the modern. There are 36,524.2 pyramid inches in the perimeter of the square base. This equals the days in the year 365; 242; or 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, 48 seconds. The number of inches in the two diagonals of the base is 258.27; the number of years in the precession of the equinoxes. Until 1874 the sun's distance was reckoned at 95,000,000 miles. From the transit of Venus in that year it was calculated by some as 91,000,000 miles; by others, as 93,000,000. The pyramid rises nine inches for every ten advanced toward the centre. Its summit points to the sun. If the inches in its height are multiplied by ten to the ninth power, it gives 91,840,000 inches, or the average number of miles in the latest calculated distance of the sun. Leading to the centre of the pyramid is a grand gallery, having seven overlapping courses of stone, indicating the week. At the end of this gallery is a room of exquisitely polished granite, called the "King's Chamber." The step leading to it is 36 inches high (our yard), and 61 inches wide, or the sacred cubit, 25, plus the yard, 36. The only furniture in this chamber is a polished granite coffer. The cubic contents of this coffer is equal to the contents of the ark of the covenant. A quarter of it is equal to the "London quarter," or standard corn measure. The cubic contents of the King's chamber and the molten sea in Solomon's temple are equal. On a stone ornament in this chamber, called the granite leaf, in its measurement, our yard, and foot, the Masonic 24-inch gauge, and the sacred cubit, all are indicated. One inch west of its centre, one inch below it, thus emphasizing the inch, is a raised boss, one inch high. A plaster-Paris model of this boss holds just a pint, and this pint of water in the temperature of the pyramid weighs just a pound. So, originally, "a pint was a pound the world around": but now a pound of water is a pint and a quarter. In a journey of several thousand years, we have strayed a little from our original standard. The miracle of it is that it is only a little. If the point of the pyramid, its apex, were placed on the equator, and its sides extended indefinitely, the angle is such that they would pass directly through the poles of the earth. The axis of the earth's rotation thus touched is the only constant straight line that science can use as a basis of measurement. The standard pyramid inch is the one-ten-millionth of this axis. The pyramid inch is only one-one-thousandth greater than ours. We should study and rectify our ancient measures, not destroy them. This is hardly an outline of this subject. Those wishing to follow it in detail should study "Our Inheritance in the Great Pyramid," "An Important Question," and similar works, from which the statements here made are taken.

ADAMS'S ADVICE.

John Quincy Adams, a patriot whom we should heed, advised the American people not to exchange their Anglo-Saxon measures for the French metric system. The "King's Chamber" of the pyramid is 412.5 inches long and 206.25 inches wide. Our 16-to-1 silver dollar weighs 412.5 grains; our half-dollar, 206.25 grains. The ante-chamber is 116.25 inches long. Our gold half-eagle weighs 116.25 grains, pure gold. The height of the pyramid is 232.5 cubits. Our gold eagle weighs 232.5 grains, pure gold.

Built into solid rock, the great pyramid contains the God-given measure of the temple; the sacred cubit; our Sabbath; our week; our year; our yard; 24-inch gauge; foot and inch; our pint and pound, or our measures of length, weight, and capacity. The reserve side of the United States great seal is a pyramid, and the Pyramid of Gezeh, built 4,000 years ago, preserves to-day the United States unit, the inch. Congress may have been given the power to "regulate our standard," the yard; but the people have never delegated to it the constitutional authority to change our unit, the inch, for the metre or anything else; and Anglo-Saxons, once aroused to the importance of the subject, will never give such authority.

G.

Preservation of Mount Vernon.

To the Editor of the Dispatch:

In the year 1854 the following well-known ladies were the efficient and pioneer workers for the purchase of Mount Vernon and the preservation of Washington's home: Mrs. Julia Cabell, Mrs. Eliza Semmes, Mrs. Susan Pellet, Mrs. William Ritchie, Mrs. Pegram, Mrs. Wirt Robinson, Mrs. Walter D. Blair, Mrs. Ben. Minor, Mrs. Joseph R. Anderson, Mrs. Thomas Ellis, and many others. The sum to be raised was $200,000, for the purchase of 200 acres of land from Mr. John Augustine Washington, then residing at Mount Vernon. Virginians contributed $7,079.44, and in order to raise this amount the State was divided into districts, and lady managers were appointed to collect money, generally in contributions of $1. The names of contributors are preserved in the bound volumes of the "Mount Vernon Record," at the rooms of the Virginia Historical Society. To these pioneer workers, founders of the association, under the lead of Miss Pamela Cunningham, of South Carolina, belong the first honors for the noble and patriotic work now so successfully established. Washington's home stands in beautiful preservation, thanks to these pioneer workers—these patriotic women!

L. R. B.

Growing Habana Tobacco in Va.

(For the Dispatch.)

I see that Colonel Thomas Whitehead, our worthy Agricultural Commissioner, is introducing Habana seed to be experimented on as a tobacco crop in Virginia, as has been often done before without any encouragement to continue it. Theory and experience teach that these seed degenerate into our special types of tobacco, and far worse for export or manufacturing. There may be some soils adapted to something of a cigar leaf type somewhere in Virginia, but it has not been yet discovered. I have seen many experimental tobaccos sold at this market at next to nothing.

There is more in curing and handling the tobacco after it is made than all else almost, which has ever been the trouble in further southern States. Even in Florida, where experts and Cubans for years have been at work trying to make an acceptable cigar tobacco, meeting with some success.

The same reason exists why bright tobacco is not more extensively made, as it has been demonstrated clearly that it can be around Richmond. The experimenters do not grasp the idea and work it takes to cure and keep the color right, in which lies the chief value of tobacco.

Bulking, sweating, assorting close as to grade and color, is something that our people are entirely unfamiliar with, even if our lands made a full-flavored Habana, but soil and climate are all against that seed in Virginia, so far demonstrated.

By all means let our Commissioner publish how to manage this crop after it is made, or else the planter will be sure to rush his tobacco to market in a green, rough state and become disgusted. A sweating season, or an artificial process, is a very delicate one, which brings out any aroma that may be in the tobacco. The light and dark and sun-cured tobacco lands of Virginia differ very greatly. Now, there must be a different kind from these altogether for seed Habana tobacco, and also a special manure for the tobacco will be worthless unless it also has good barning properties. Brights will succeed if made and cured right, we all know.

W. E. D.

Public Libraries.

To the Editor of the Dispatch:

The chartering of a public library in Lynchburg, with an influential directory, is an event of enlightening progress in the State to give profound satisfaction. The eastern and western cities have their public libraries, and some of the former vie in extent and value with those of European cities. Their usefulness to the accurate student and the author have changed the world's estimate of the publications of the United States, so that now, instead of being subsidiary, they lead in thought and directive influence. Cannot Richmond, too, have another "public" library than the State Library?

Public and Private Libraries—Great Britain and America.

(For the Dispatch.)

G. Hedeler, publisher of the Export Journal, bookseller, and agent for libraries, Leipzig, announces the following works of interest, as well to individuals of bias and taste, as to libraries and colleges: "Life of Private Libraries, United States and Canada"; "List of Private Libraries, Great Britain."

The circular prospectus gives a specimen page of the first of these works, in which it is evident that the descriptive features of the libraries are fairly informatory. The "lists" are printed in parallel columns, in three languages—German, French, and English.

The value of such a medium will be fully estimated, at least by students; but the curious and others may also be interested.

The libraries include only those numbering 3,000 volumes or more. It may be noted that two citizens of Richmond are listed—Messrs. R. A. Brock and R. L. Traylor—but there are probably many others in the city and State.

Falstaff's Dying Words.

(New York Critic.)

We quote here some of the opinions called forth by Mr. Locke Richardson's interpretation (in the Critic of November 28th) of Falstaff's dying words:

The Hon. W. E. Gladstone: "You have obtained, in favor of your suggestion, judgments which will well enable you to dispense with mine. To me, however, it appears highly ingenious and fairly probable. It would be a powerful aid if you could find 'field' or 'fields' in any version of the Psalms with which Shakespeare is likely to have been familiar. So far as I have looked, 'pastures' is the favorite word."

Alexander Melville Bell: "Your new interpretation is obviously right. It satisfies both heart and mind."

Professor Barrett Wendell, of Harvard: "Your suggestion has a rare beauty of its own, and is wholly consonant with the character of Falstaff as Shakespeare sets it forth."

Hamilton W. Mabie: "You have really transformed the total impression of a character."

Charles Dudley Warner: "I am delighted with your study of Falstaff, and feel sure that your interpretation will be gladly accepted."

George Riddle: "You have given birth to a very poetical, charming, and characteristic thought, and your view is supported by internal evidence, which is the best evidence."

Andrew Lang: "Your suggestion is pleasing and ingenious."

Professor Edward Dowden, of Trinity College, Dublin, thinks the change of 'pastures" to "fields" would be quite in Mistress Quickly's manner, but he is not so sure of Theobald's emendation. Dr. Furnivall is the only scholar who absolutely scouts the new interpretation. He thinks "green fields" means "grounds," as in heraldry.

Mr. Richardson adds this note:

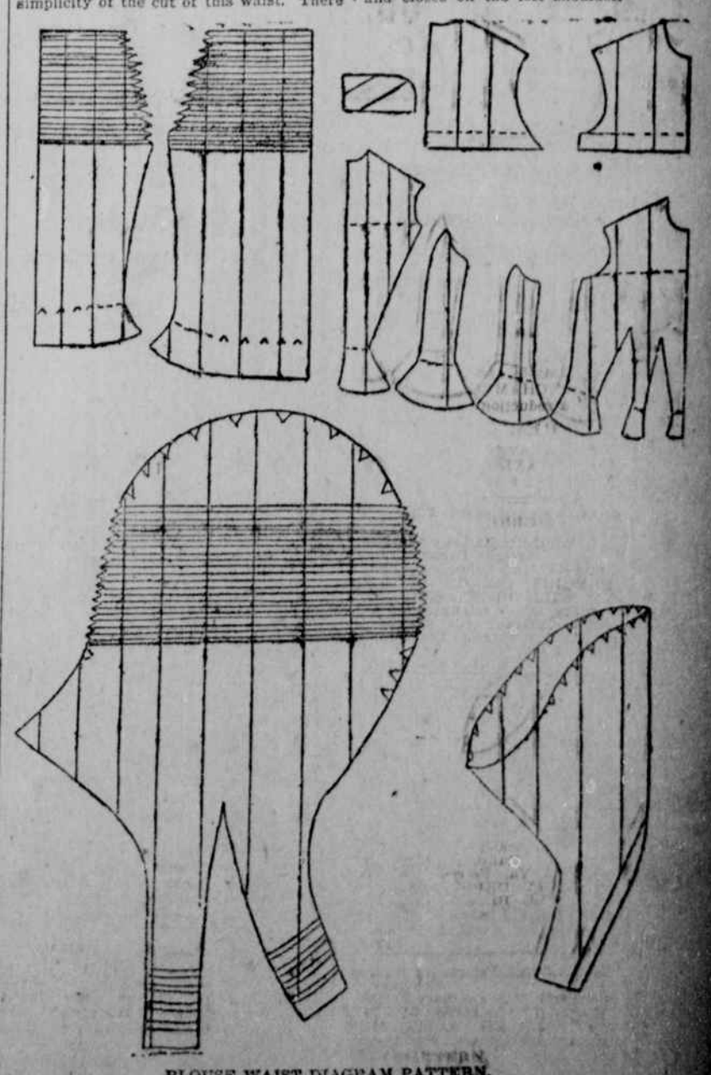
"I have used the King James' Version of the XXIII. Psalm, as being more familiar to the general public than the one used by Shakespeare, which reads thus:

"'The Lord is my Shepherd, therefore can I lack nothing. He shall feed me in a green pasture, and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort. He shall convert my soul, and bring me forth in the paths of righteousness. Thou shalt prepare a table before me.'

"From the great English Bible, set forth and used in the time of King Henry VIII. and Edward VI."

1. Striped brocade matinee trimmed with chiffon and jewelled passementerie.
2. Spring model for separate bodice. This elegant blouse waist may be made up in silk or fine wool. It is tucked across the tops of the sleeves, the back, and the fronts where they join the yoke. These tucks may remain flat or be stiffened with cords, one of the fads of 1897. The yoke may be silk, covered with lace; the material of the waist itself braided or figured brocade. The closing is on the left side, and is concealed by ribbon bows and drapery. The diagram pattern shows the extreme simplicity of the cut of this waist. There is no waistband, but the top of the skirt worn with it is corded.

The vertical lines on the diagram pattern designate the thread of the material and how to place an ordinary waist pattern, which must be modified according to the illustration. The horizontal lines show where to tuck body and sleeves. There are no tucks on the under arm pieces which are cut exactly alike in lining and material. There are no seams in the centre of the back, either in lining or outside. The lining fronts close in the centre, but the material extends on the right side nearly across to the left, where the closing takes place. The front of the yoke is cut whole in the goods and closes on the left shoulder.



BLOUSE WAIST DIAGRAM PATTERN.

Elegant robe de chambre of black satin or colored wool. This latest design for house gowns has a large white satin directoire collar braided with gold and edged with lace. The back is princess shape but the fronts fall straight. The sleeves are gathered into cuffs braided like the collar.